Hello School Library Advocates,

STATUS: As of this morning, the SKILLS battle is lost in the U.S. House, but we still have a chance in the Senate. Emily Sheketoff, ALA Washington Office, told me that they are not hearing from Senator Casey’s office and he is an important member of the Senate HELP/Education Committee. That means not enough of you are making the calls to his offices or sending emails. We only have a few days left to get him to co-sign S. 312 the SKILLS ACT. If you want things to improve for school libraries, DO THIS NOW!!! And if you have already done steps 1 through 3 below, do it again! Pennsylvania is a critical state in this legislative effort! Let Bob Casey hear from us!

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO:

1.     Make the Call. (see directions below)

2.     Also email him, just copy and paste them message below at<http://www.casey.senate.gov/contact>

3.     Then forward this email to all you friends, family, and teaching colleagues.

BACKGROUND: The reauthorization of ESEA (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) currently known as No Child Left Behind is being drafted by both the Senate HELP (Health, Education, Labor & Pensions) Committee and the House Education & Workforce Committee in DC.

Although the major points of contention are over student testing and teacher evaluation, we have an opportunity to have provisions from the SKILLS Act added to ESEA to provide dedicated funding for effective school library programs.

Please call both our Senators NOW by simply completing the contact form at this ALA link below. You will then be prompted with the correct DC phone numbers in order for Senator Casey and Toomey. There will be information there about SKILLS and talking points.

Most times you will get an automated recording and have to leave a voicemail. However, all you need to say is:

“Please ask the Senator to co-sponsor S. 312 the SKILLS Act which stands for Strengthening Kids’ Interest in Learning and Libraries. It has been introduced by Senators Reed, Cochran, and Whitehouse. School libraries improve student learning and are critical for students to compete in today’s global economy. Please ask the Senator to support dedicated funding for effective school library programs under ESEA by co-sponsoring S.312. Thank you.”

Don’t forget to give your name and address with zipcode.

<http://cqrcengage.com/ala/app/make-a-call?13&engagementId=80622>

Thanks so much! Deb

**Library Grants Awarded to Greenville, Sharon**

January 13, 2015

Two communities in the 50th Senate District will receive state grants totaling more than $553,000 to support capital improvement projects at their public libraries, according to Senator Michele Brooks.

Borough of Greenville will receive $500,000 for ADA upgrades to bathrooms and for elevator, ramp, and lighting improvements at the Greenville Area Public Library.

The City of Sharon will receive $53,150 for renovations including ADA upgrades to bathrooms and installation of an automated front door for ADA accessibility at the Shenango Valley Community Library.

“An ever increasing number of local families are using our libraries as a resource for leisure and learning,” Senator Brooks said. “These investments by the state in Greenville and Sharon will improve handicapped accessibility and provide a better experience for library patrons,”

Keystone Fund Grants, awarded by the state Department of Education, provide funding to municipalities that sponsor state-aided public libraries. These competitive grants pay up to 50 percent of eligible costs of planning, acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of public libraries. A dollar-for-dollar local match is required for state grant funds received.

Contact:

Mike Hengst  
(717) 787-1322

### Kids Resources

[Our Commonwealth](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Commonwealth) | [Our Nation](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Nation) | [Resources for School Reports](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#School)  
[Parent and Teacher Resources](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Resources) | [Community Organizations](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/kids-resources/#Community)

Our Commonwealth | Back to [Top](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Top)

* [College Student Information](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/college/17514) – Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board
* [DEP Kids Page](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/justforkids/site/default.asp?depNav=%7C) – Department of Environmental Protection
* [Places for Kids](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/recommended_websites/8740/places_for_kids/524572) – Department of Education
* [Hallowed Grounds](http://www.visitpa.com/pa/history-heritage/hallowed-grounds) – Whether your interest is historical, spiritual, or something else, Pennsylvania’s many sacred sites are fascinating to explore. Cemeteries, monuments, battlefields, and other significant places give a new perspective on our heritage.
* [Tools for Kids, Parents and Schools](http://www.attorneygeneral.gov/kidsparents.aspx) – Office of Attorney General
* [L. C. Bee’s Kids Page](http://www.lcbapps.lcb.state.pa.us/webapp/edu/youth/elementary/Index.asp) – Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board
* [Pennsylvania General Assembly](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/) – The website of the Pennsylvania General Assembly which is made up of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.
* [Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/)
* [Pennsylvania Manual](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=1294&&SortOrder=40&level=3&parentid=1291&css=L3&mode=2&in_hi_userid=94664&cached=true)
* [PennDOT Kids’ Pages](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/pdKids.nsf/IntroKidsPage?OpenFrameset) – Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
* [Places for Kids](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/online_resources/7488/kids_page/509240) – Division of Food and Nutrition – Pennsylvania Department of Education
* [State Kids Page](http://sites.state.pa.us/kids/) – Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
* [VisitPA.com](http://www.visitpa.com/) – VisitPA.com is the official Travel and Tourism web site for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Our Nation | Back to [Top](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Top)

* [“America’s Story” from America’s Library](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi) – A fun site for kids and families from the Library of Congress. You can have fun with history while learning at the same time by putting the story back in history and show you some things that you’ve never heard or seen before.
* [American Memory: American History in Words, Sounds & Pictures](http://memory.loc.gov/) – American Memory is part of the National Digital Library Program of the Library of Congress where millions of items relating to the history and culture of the United States can be found.
* [Ben’s Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids](http://bensguide.gpo.gov/)
* [Bill of Rights](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights.html) – Amendments 1-10 of the Constitution
* [Census Bureau for Kids](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml)
* [CIA Kids Page](https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/index.html)– Central Intelligence Agency
* [Constitution of the United States](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html) – Full text of the U.S. Constitution
* [The Declaration of Independence](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration.html) – Full text of the Declaration of Independence
* [FBI Kids Page](http://www.fbi.gov/kids/k5th/kidsk5th.htm) – Federal Bureau of Investigation
* [The Federalist Papers](http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/) – A list of titles and the text of the 85 Federalist Papers.
* [Kids.gov](http://www.kids.gov/) – A kids portal page developed and maintained by the Federal Consumer Information Center.
* [First Ladies of the United States](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/index.html)
* [Kids in the U.S. House of Representatives](http://kids.clerk.house.gov/)
* [Library of Congress](http://www.loc.gov/) – The largest library in the world and the nation’s library
* [NCES Kids’ Zone](http://nces.ed.gov/nceskids/)
* [National Gallery of Art Kids Page](http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/education/kids.html)
* [Peace Corps for Kids](http://www.peacecorps.gov/kids/)
* [President Reagan Library](http://www.reaganlibrary.com/)
* [Smithsonian George Washington Game](http://georgewashington.si.edu/kids/portrait.html)
* [Smokey Bear’s Official Home Page](http://www.smokeybear.com/) – Only you can prevent wildfires!
* [Social Security Kids Place](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/kids/)
* [Today in History from the Library of Congress](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/today.html)
* [Truman Presidential Museum and Library](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/kids/index.html)
* [U.S. Department of State for Youth](http://www.state.gov/youthandeducation/)
* [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](http://www.fws.gov/kids/)
* [United States Mint](http://www.usmint.gov/kids/) – Kid Pages
* [Women of NASA](http://women.nasa.gov/)

Resources For School Reports | Back to [Top](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Top)

* [America’s Library](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi) – The Library of Congress site for families and children – an excellent site for American history and culture.
* [AskKids.com](http://www.askforkids.com/) – Kids pose a question and Jeeves provides answers and links.
* [Bartleby](http://www.bartleby.com/) – The most comprehensive reference publisher on the web, meeting the needs of students, educators, and the intellectually curious.
* [Homework Spot](http://www.homeworkspot.com/) – Homework information portal for all grade levels, includes reference links to virtually every subject topic found in schools.
* [Math World](http://mathworld.wolfram.com/)
* [Metropolitan Museum of Art](http://www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-kids)
* [Mr. Rogers](http://pbs.org/rogers/)
* [National Geographic for Kids](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/) – Fact-filled features in one area. Find maps, photos and more.
* [New York Times Learning Network](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/) – For grades 3-12. Includes news summaries, daily news quiz, test prep questions and more.
* [Scholastic Books](http://www.scholastic.com/)
* [White House](http://www.whitehouse.gov/)
* [Women in History](http://search.eb.com/women/)
* [World Flags Database](http://www.flags.net/)

Parent and Teacher Resources | Back to [Top](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Top)

* [Center for Civic Education](http://new.civiced.org/) – Lesson plans for elementary, middle and high school grades
* [C-SPAN in the Classroom](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/) – Free resources to use with C-SPAN programming including teacher guides, activities and success stories collected from teachers nationwide.
* [DEP for Educators](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_education/6013) – A site from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection dedicated to educators.
* [DiscoveryEducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/index.cfm?campaign=flyout_teachers) – Find original U.S. History/Government lesson plans written by teachers for teachers.
* [Educator’s Reference Desk](http://resources.webschoolpro.com/the-educators-reference-desk_education-reference_1238.html) – Educational Resources Information Center
* [Places for Parents](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/recommended_websites/8740/places_for_parents/524571) – Links to websites for parents from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
* [Places for Teachers](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/recommended_websites/8740/places_for_teachers/524570) – Links to websites for teachers from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
* [Project Childsafe](http://www.projectchildsafe.org/) – Putting a lock on safety in your home.

Community Organizations | Back to [Top](http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/#Top)

* [Americorps](http://www.americorps.gov/)
* [Boy Scouts of America](http://www.scouting.org/)
* [Girl Scouts](http://www.girlscouts.org/)
* [Habitat for Humanity International](http://www.habitat.org/)
* [National Junior Classical League](http://www.njcl.org/)
* [National Forensic League](http://www.nflonline.org/Main/HomePage)
* [National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society](http://www.nhs.us/)
* [Peace Corps](http://www.peacecorps.gov/)

Found at: <http://www.senatorbrooks.com/kids-resources/>

**(Feb 11) Governor Wolf proposes education reinvestment plan featuring natural gas severance tax**

**The following press release was issued by Governor Wolf’s Press Office.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
F**ebruary 11, 2015**

**Governor Wolf Proposes Education Reinvestment Plan Featuring Natural Gas Severance Tax**

**Thorndale, Pa.** – Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf today proposed an education reinvestment plan featuring a severance tax on natural gas extraction as part of his solution to properly fund public education in the commonwealth. Pennsylvania’s schools have suffered from $1 billion in funding cuts in recent years forcing school districts to increase class sizes, lay-off teachers and other staff, and make serious program cuts that make it more difficult for students to get a strong education in Pennsylvania’s public schools.

“We can get Pennsylvania back on track, and we can start by passing a commonsense severance tax that will help fund our schools – an idea with bipartisan support,” Governor Wolf said. “The commonwealth ranks 45th in the nation in percentage of state funding for public education, and as a result, we have seen larger class sizes, fewer teachers, and vital program cuts. These cuts have made it more difficult for students to get a strong education in Pennsylvania’s public schools. This is the right thing to do for our children and our economy and to move Pennsylvania forward.”

The proposal, called the Pennsylvania Education Reinvestment Act, enacts a reasonable 5% severance tax plus 4.7 cents per thousand feet of volume on extraction, which is expected to generate over a billion dollars in fiscal year 2017 prior to exemptions. It is modeled on neighboring West Virginia’s severance tax plan.

Pennsylvania sits on one of the largest deposits of natural gas in the world. Other natural gas producing states, including Texas and Oklahoma, levy a similar – and in some cases higher – tax on extraction to fund key priorities and initiatives.

Implementing a similar structure to West Virginia will ensure that Pennsylvania is competitive with neighboring states. In addition, this approach has the benefit of being field tested. West Virginia offers proof that a state can build a thriving and unconventional natural gas industry while simultaneously using a portion of the proceeds to help make a better future for its citizens.

The proposal would continue the payments made to impacted communities and make reasonable exemptions for: gas given away for free; gas from low producing wells; and wells brought back into production after not having produced marketable quantities of gas. It will also contain provisions to protect property owners who lease land for natural gas exploration.

Contact: Jeff Sheridan, 717-783-1116

# # #

**Full text of policy memorandum sent to legislators:**

Pennsylvania’s schools have suffered from $1 billion in funding cuts and a lack of resources. We have seen larger class sizes, fewer teachers, and program cuts that make it more difficult for students to get a strong education in Pennsylvania’s public schools. If we are going to get our Commonwealth back on track and be competitive in the 21st century economy, we must provide our young people with the educational foundation necessary to be successful. Pennsylvania currently ranks 45th in the nation in the percentage of funding the state provides for public education. This is intolerable. Pennsylvania must take the lead in investing in early childhood, K-12, and higher education.

With Pennsylvania sitting on one of the largest deposits of natural gas in the world, it is up to us to use this resource wisely so it benefits all Pennsylvanians and helps to fund our schools. Pennsylvania is currently the only major gas producing state in the country that does not charge a tax on oil and natural gas extraction – and we’re failing to tax this resource at a time when our schools need more funding. If states like Texas, West Virginia, and Oklahoma are able to charge a severance tax to fund key priorities, it is long past time Pennsylvania does too.

In order to ensure that we are appropriately funding education at all levels, I am today proposing the Pennsylvania Education Reinvestment Act. This will raise needed new revenue for our state’s public education system by imposing a reasonable tax – in line with our neighbors – on the extraction of natural gas within the state.

The tax proposed in the Education Reinvestment Act will be modelled after the severance tax in neighboring West Virginia, which like Pennsylvania has seen a recent boom in production of natural gas from unconventional drilling. Implementing a similar structure to West Virginia will ensure that Pennsylvania is competitive with neighboring states. In addition, this approach has the benefit of being field tested. West Virginia offers proof that a state can build a thriving unconventional natural gas industry while simultaneously using a portion of the proceeds to help make a better future for its citizens.

I am proposing a 5% plus 4.7 cents per MCF tax. My proposal would not be on top of the existing impact fee but includes it. My proposal would continue the payments made to communities impacted by drilling that are currently funded by the impact fee.

We can get Pennsylvania back on track, and we can start by passing a commonsense severance tax that will help fund our schools – an idea with bipartisan support. At a time when our budget is facing significant challenges and our schools are struggling, it simply makes sense to pass a competitive, commonsense severance tax.

**Key Features**

Tax of:

* 5% of the value of gas at the wellhead;
* 7¢ per thousand cubic feet of volume severed.

Reasonable exemptions for:

* gas given away free;
* gas from low producing wells;
* wells brought back into production after not having produced marketable quantities of gas.

A tax with this structure is expected to generate over a billion dollars in fiscal year 2017 with revenue expected to grow with production. This number is based on the following estimates of production from both conventional and unconventional wells:

* 2015: 4,915.0 bcf
* 2016: 4,978.2 bcf
* 2017: 5,065.3 bcf
* 2018: 5,114.0 bcf
* 2019: 5,186.2 bcf
* 2020: 5,265.5 bcf

Finally, the Education Reinvestment Act will contain provisions to protect property owners who lease land for natural gas exploration. No portion of the tax imposed in this legislation will be allowed to be deducted from royalty payments.

|  |
| --- |
| **Schools That Teach: 2015-16 Budget** |
| http://www.portal.state.pa.us/imageserver/plumtree/portal/public/img/sp.gif |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | The Governor's Budget invests $1 billion in early childhood, K-12 and higher education funding, and cost savings and represents the first phase in Governor Wolf's goal of investing $2 billion in preK-12 education over the next four year to meet the state's educational commitments and provide all children with a quality public education.  The budget includes the following: **Basic and Special Education Funding** Included in the Governor’s Budget is a $500 million total increase in the Basic and Special Education Funding formulas.   The Basic Education Funding increase of $400 million will restore Accountability Block Grant, Education Assistance Program and Basic Education Funding cut in previous years and will provide a reimbursement comprising approximately ten percent of the amount school districts are required to make in payments to charter schools.   The Special Education Funding formula continues the transition to the use of categories of support for students with disabilities in the formula recommended by the Special Education Funding Commission.  A total of $115.8 million, a $96 million increase, will be distributed through the student-based formula.   [2015-16 Proposed Basic and Special Education Funding](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/http;/www.portal.state.pa.us;80/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_123706_1481910_0_0_18/EdBudget%202015-16%20proposed%20BEF%20and%20SEF%20Mar2015.xlsx) (Excel)    **Property Tax Relief** The Governor’s Budget provides $3.8 billion in property tax relief across Pennsylvania starting in 2016-2017.  This represents a total homeowner property tax cut averaging more than 50 percent.   [2016-17 Proposed Property Tax Relief](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/http;/www.portal.state.pa.us;80/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_123706_1481908_0_0_18/EdBudget%202016-17%20proposed%20SPTRA%20Mar2015.xlsx) (Excel)    **Cyber Charter School Tuition Savings** The Governor’s Budget includes a cyber charter school funding reform plan meant to reflect the structural realities that differentiate cyber charter schools from their brick and mortar counterparts.  Under this reform plan, the nonspecial education rate would be set at $5,950 and would be annually increased by the Act 1 index.  The special education rates would be determined as recommended by the Special Education Funding Commission for Category 1, 2 and 3 students.  Based on data from the 2013-2014 school year, Pennsylvania school districts would save an estimated $162 million.   [Estimated Cyber Charter School Tuition Savings](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/http;/www.portal.state.pa.us;80/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_123706_1481907_0_0_18/EdBudget%20Estimated%20Cyber%20CS%20savings%20Mar2015.xlsx) (Excel) | |

**For additional information, please contact:**  
  
**Benjamin Hanft | Division of Subsidy Data and Administration**   
Pennsylvania Department of Education - Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Management   
333 Market Street | Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333   
Phone: 717.787.5423 | Fax: 717.772.4106 | TTY: 717.783.8445   
[bhanft@pa.gov](mailto:bhanft@pa.gov) | [www.education.state.pa.us](http://www.education.state.pa.us/)

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/education_budget/8699/schools_that_teach__2015-16_budget/539263>

**Act 48 Hours**

Effective January 1, 2015, PDE began accepting **official** electronic transcripts (eTranscripts) from **out-of-state institutions of higher education** for the purpose of documenting completion of Act 48 continuing professional education requirements. eTranscripts must be submitted to PDE by the out-of-state institution via the following email address: [**ra-edact48etrscrpt@pa.gov**](mailto:ra-edact48etrscrpt@pa.gov). Please note that credits from Pennsylvania institutions of higher education must be uploaded directly into PERMS by the institution. This is typically done by the registrar’s office. PDE continues to accept hard copy official sealed transcripts from out-of-state institutions.

For more information, contact Pat Fortenbaugh, Administrative Assistant of the Division of Planning at[pfortenbau@pa.gov](mailto:pfortenbau@pa.gov) or (717) 772-3817.